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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
Office of Current Intelligence
17 April 1966

INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM

The Political Situation in South Vietnam
(As of 12:00 Noon)

1. The situation has been generally quiet throughout the country today. A demonstration scheduled for this morning in Da Nang was cancelled, although a "practice alert" called by antigovernment elements at noontime temporarily set off new rumors of an imminent Saigon military operation against the city. General Dinh, the I Corps commander, travelled to Tam Ky, the capital of Quang Tin Province to the south of Da Nang, to help ease a tense situation caused by the introduction into the town of armed elements from both pro- and antigovernment factions.

2. Today's lull is scarcely indicative of any marked improvement in the situation, however. Both the Hue and Da Nang radio stations continue to broadcast provocative, and even fabricated, statements aimed at keeping the pot boiling. Da Nang radio claimed yesterday that General Thi had visited the "struggle forces" headquarters to reaffirm solidarity at a meeting also attended by General Dinh. US observers in Saigon have commented that Dinh's continued dealing with antigovernment officials in Da Nang has helped to provide the latter a "legal base" for their activities and that the central government's position in Da Nang still appears to be deteriorating.

3. Tri Quang indicated

that he still planned to visit I Corps, but that domestic flights to Hue were still suspended, possibly to keep him out of the area. Quang reiterated that the Buddhists were satisfied with the government's agreement to their demands, but warned that

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"everything" now depends on whether the Ky government carries out its promises in good faith or seeks revenge. He hinted that, among other things, this means release of all persons detained in Buddhist demonstrations. In past campaigns the Buddhists have applied this demand even to demonstrators identified as Viet Cong. Quang, [redacted]

25X1

[redacted] once again denied that he was a Communist or in contact with the Liberation Front. He also denied any split between himself and Buddhist Institute chairman Tam Chau.

4. About 3,000 Catholics resettled from North Vietnam paraded today in a refugee village about 15 miles northeast of Saigon. The tone of the demonstration was pro-American and pro-government, with the purpose of making it clear that the Catholics supported elections but not under conditions which would permit Viet Cong inroads. The northern refugee Catholics have long tended to equate the militant Buddhists with the Communists.

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